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CONCISE VIEW
OF
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BY JOHN CRAPS.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”—MARK xvi. 16.

HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED AT THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER OFFICE.

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CONCISE VIEW OF
Christian Baptism.

BY JOHN CRAPS

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."—MARK xvi. 16.

THE object of this tract is to present a concise view of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.—It is not intended to provoke controversy, but to vindicate a *divine ordinance*. The writer loves all who love Christ, and sincerely prays, that they may "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." We are commanded "by love to serve one another;" and as they are happy who *know* and *do* the will of God, to aid in the attainment of this happiness is a service which love requires, and which love cannot condemn.

Baptism being an ordinance of the New Testament, all questions respecting it must be determined by that infallible book. The writings of the fathers, the traditions of men and the customs of the church, are no authority on the subject.

I. *The PERSONS to be baptized.*

Are they *infants*, or are they *believers* only? What say the scriptures?

1. John "preached in the wilderness of Judea," and baptized such as "confessed their sins,"—Matt. iii. 1-6;

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Mark i. 5. He "baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ."—Acts xix.

4. As John required those whom he baptized to *confess their sins* and *believe* in the coming Messiah, it is evident *infants* could not be the subjects of his baptism.

2. Our adorable Lord and Saviour was baptized, not in *infancy*, but when he "began to be about thirty years of age."—Luke iii. 23.

3. Jesus baptized by his disciples in the land of Judea. And he "made and baptized more disciples than John."—John iv. 1. He made disciples, then *baptized* them. We do not read of his baptizing any but *disciples*: and these could not be *infants*, for he says, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."—Luke xiv. 27.

4. The gospel commission is, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—Mark xvi. 15, 16. The Saviour "made and baptized disciples" in Judea, but the apostles were to "go into all the world," to make and baptize disciples. The first duty enjoined in this commission is to *make* disciples by preaching the gospel. The second duty is to *baptize* such disciples, or *believers*; as they are called in Mark. This commission is no authority for *infant* baptism, but it positively commands the baptism of all *believers*.

5. When those who "were pricked in their heart," enquired "What shall we do?" Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you.' And "they that gladly received his word were baptized."—Acts ii. 37-41. Here Peter made disciples by preaching the gospel, and such disciples were baptized. On this occasion "about

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three thousand" were baptized. But there is not the least intimation that *one* of these was an *infant*.

3. "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." And "when they *believed* Phillip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both *men* and *women*."—Acts viii. 5-12. The narrative says nothing about infants.—Had Philip baptized infants no doubt they would have been mentioned here.

7. The Eunuch inquired; "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip replied, "If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou *mayest*." He said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then he was baptized—Acts viii. 26-36.

8. At Cæsarea the "Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."—Acts x. 44-48. These "heard the word, and received the Holy Ghost," before they were baptized, and therefore they were not *infants*, but believers.

9. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, and "she was baptized, and her household."—Acts xvi. 14, 15. There is no evidence that Lydia had any children, or even that she was, or had been married, therefore this example can afford no support to *infant* baptism. There are probably more households without infants than with them, consequently the baptism of a household can be no proof of infant baptism.

10. Paul and Silas spake unto the Jailor "the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he was baptized, he and all his straightway." And he "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."—Acts xvi. 31-34. The apostles would not "speak the word of the

Lord" to *infants*. Nor could it be said of *infants* that they "rejoiced, believing in God." But this is said of the Jailor and of all his house.

11. "Crispus believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."—Acts xviii. 8. All the house of Crispus "believed on the Lord," therefore, *none* of them could be *infants*.—The "many Corinthians" heard, "believed," and then were baptized."

12. Paul "baptized the household of Stephanus."—1 Cor. i. 14-16. "Ye know the house of Stephanus, that it is the *first fruits* of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." 1 Cor. xvi. 15. These *ministers* to the saints could not be *infants*.

These instances of baptism are referred to, not so much for the purpose of proving that believers, both men and women, are proper subjects for baptism, as to show that "in all the instances of baptism in the scriptures, there is not the slightest intimation of *infants* having been baptized. The principal object is to shew that nothing can be gathered from the scriptures *in favour of* infant baptism. This is not merely *admitted*, but *affirmed* by the following unexceptionable witnesses. Luther says, "It cannot be proved by the sacred scriptures, that infant baptism was instituted by Christ." Bishop Burnet says, "There is no *express precept or rule*, given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants."

There is, however, another and still stronger objection to infant baptism; the scriptures contain *presumptive evidence against it*.

1. The evangelists three times record the fact that infants were brought to Christ. Had Christ baptized infants, we may suppose they would have been brought to him *for baptism*. But they were not brought *for baptism*, but that he might "touch them;"—Luke xviii. 15, and "put his hands on them and pray."—Matt. xix. 13. Jesus did not

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baptize these infants, but "took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and prayed."—Mark x. 16. "In not one of these three accounts is there the slightest allusion to infant baptism." Let the reader judge whether, if it had been the will of Christ that infants should be baptized, he would not have given some intimation of it on this favourable occasion? Is not the absence of any reference to baptism on such an occasion a presumptive evidence that it is not the will of Christ that infants should be baptized?

2. Baptism is that of which *infants are incapable*. For instance :

Baptism is a fulfilling of righteousness.—Matt. iii. 15. But infants can neither commit sin nor fulfil righteousness.

Baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God,"—1 Peter iii. 21. But infants can have neither a good nor a bad conscience.

Baptism implies, and is a sign of dying unto sin and living unto God.—Rom. vi. 3-12. But infants can neither die unto sin nor live unto God.

Baptism is a burial with Christ, and a rising with him *through faith*.—Col. ii. 12. But infants can neither be buried nor rise with Christ *through faith*.

Baptism is a profession of discipleship to Christ—a putting on of Christ.—Gal. iii. 27. But infants cannot 'put on Christ.'

The person is to be baptized "in" or into "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." That is 'by the authority, and into the faith, profession, and worship of the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit.—Dr. Guyse. But infants cannot *worship*, or *profess*, or believe in, or submit to the authority of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

If this be a correct view of christian baptism, there is a manifest impropriety in applying it to infants, for they can neither be what it implies nor do what it requires.

3. God institutes no *useless* ceremonies. But it cannot be proved that *infant baptism* answers any valuable purpose. Can baptism be profitable to an *unconscious infant*? Ob-

servation sufficiently proves that those baptized in infancy manifest the same depravity of nature as those who are not baptized. They develop no more qualities by which they can be distinguished from others.—Baptism effects no change in the *character* of the infant, and therefore cannot effect any change in its *spiritual condition*. Infant baptism is a *useless*, and therefore an unreasonable ceremony; can such a ceremony be part of that religion, the whole of which is designed for our profit?

4. The religion of the New Testament is essentially a voluntary service. Such as feel and confess their sins—exercise faith in the divine testimony—choose the Divine Being for their portion—cheerfully yield obedience to the divine law—and seek their reward in divine approbation, according to the gospel, are the subjects of religion. The gospel admits no act as religious but such as is voluntary. Infant baptism is not, on the part of the subject supposed to be most concerned, a voluntary, but a compulsory ceremony. It is something altogether dissimilar from the whole genius of the gospel. The beast with ten horns, mentioned by Daniel, was not more diverse from the other three, than infant baptism is from the voluntary religion of the New Testament.

5. The religion taught by Jesus Christ is spiritual and personal. They, and they alone, are the subjects of this religion, “who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” To these belong the right of being the children of God, and on the ground of this spiritual birth they are entitled to spiritual privileges. But how discordant with this is infant baptism! It is practised not on the ground of spiritual but of carnal birth; not on the ground of personal, but of relative piety, or a mere proxy profession. Can such a carnal ordinance be a part of gospel reformation?

6. If the scriptures contain no precept for, and no example of infant baptism—if they say not one word about

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infants in connexion with baptism—if baptism is that of which infants are incapable—and if baptism is not consistent with the personal, voluntary, and spiritual religion of the gospel—then every unbiassed mind must conclude that baptism ought not to be administered to infants. And consequently, those who have been baptized in infancy only, have not been, in the sense of scripture, baptized at all. The rite administered in their infancy being altogether different from that which the Word of God enjoins, they are yet *unbaptized* according to the scriptures, and, without doubt they ought to consider themselves as *unbaptized persons*.

II. *Is baptism* IMMERSION or SPRINKLING?

This question may be determined by the following considerations:—

1. The word *baptism* means *immersion*; enemies to immersion being judges.

CALVIN.—“The word *baptize* signifies to *immerse*.”

BEZA.—“Christ commanded us to be *baptized*, by which word it is certain *immersion* is signified.”

DR. CAMPBELL.—“The word *baptizing*, both in sacred writers and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to *immerse*.”

T. SCOTT.—“*Immersion* is doubtless *baptism*.” Life by J. Scott.*

2. The word sprinkle and pour frequently occur in the scriptures, but there is not one instance in which the original of them is either *bapto* or *baptizo*. The words *bapto* and *baptizo* frequently occur in the original scriptures, but there is not one instance in which they are translated sprinkle or pour.

3. The word dip or dipt occurs six times in the New Testament, and in every instance the original word is *bapto*

* Many other authorities might be quoted from the writings of Pædobaptists.

or *embapto*. This plainly shews that *bapto*, from which the word baptize is derived, means to dip or to *immerse*.

4. The word immersion will, in every case, supply the place of the word baptism, so as to make good sense; but the word sprinkling will not, neither will the word pouring. This the reader may easily prove, by examining all the passages in which the word baptism occurs. Is not this a plain evidence that baptism is immersion and not sprinkling or pouring?

5. The words which properly mean sprinkling and pouring, are never used in the New Testament to describe christian baptism. If baptism were either sprinkling or pouring, would not the term which properly expresses such have been sometimes used by the sacred writers to describe the ordinance? If the term which properly means *immersion* is the only one used in the scriptures to denote the ordinance, must not the ordinance be *immersion*?

6. "John baptized in the river of Jordan."—Mark i. 5. "And Jesus was baptized of John in Jordan."—Mark i. 9. If John immersed our Lord and others, this account of his administering the rite in the river of Jordan is plain and natural. Is it reasonable to suppose that a prudent man would go into a river merely to sprinkle another? Can an instance be produced from history of people going into a river for the purpose of being sprinkled? Do those who sprinkle in the present day ever go into a river for that purpose?

7. Jesus went up straightway out of the water.—Matt. iii. 16. A proof that he was baptized in the water, and an evidence that baptism is *immersion*.

8. "John was baptizing in Enon—because there was much water there,"—John iii. 23. Notice the reason, "because there was much water there." "Because there was a great quantity of water there".—Doddridge. Is this reason satisfactory if he sprinkled the people? Would that have required much water? Would not a single

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Philip and the Eunuch "came to a certain water;—and they went down both into the water; both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip."—Acts viii. 36-39. They came to this water, and then went down into it, and when he baptized him they came up out of the water. This is exactly what *immersion* would require, but what would have been unnecessary for sprinkling, or pouring. The sacred historian could not have described the *immersion* of the Eunuch in more clear and forcible language.

10. Our Lord calls his suffering, a baptism; "I have a *baptism* to be *baptized* with."—Luke xii. 50. Jesus here refers to those deep waters of divine justice into which he was soon to sink for man's redemption. In reference to which he might truly say; "I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." If baptism is *immersion*, there is an obvious propriety in calling these sufferings a *baptism*, because there is a striking resemblance. But if baptism were sprinkling there would be no propriety in the figure, because there would be no resemblance.

11. The Israelites were "baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea."—1 Cor. x. 1. 2. Dr. Whitby says: "Both the cloud and the sea had some resemblance to our being covered with water in baptism; their going into the sea resembled the ancient rite of going into the water, and their coming out of it, their rising up out of the water."

12. "Believers were buried with Christ in baptism." That the Apostle here alludes to *immersion* is generally admitted. Mr. Wesley is constrained to allow that this is an allusion to the ancient manner of baptizing by *immersion*. In Rom. vi. 4. and Col. ii. 12, the Apostle speaks of baptism as an emblem of a burial and of a resurrection, there must

therefore be in baptism something that corresponds to these. Neither sprinkling nor pouring in any way resembles either a burial or a resurrection, but an *immersion* in the water and a rising out of it strikingly resemble both. This must be obvious to every unprejudiced mind.

13. If, as Mr. Scott says, immersion is doubtless baptism, if the term *immersion* will in every case translate the term *baptism*, and the words sprinkling and pouring will not—if the terms properly meaning sprinkling and pouring are not once used in the Scripture to denote the ordinance—if baptism was administered in the river Jordan and where there was much water—if the baptizer and the baptized went down both into the water—if baptism resemble the sufferings of Christ—if it resembles the state of the Israelites in the cloud and in the sea—and if it resemble a death, burial and resurrection—then let the unbiassed reader judge whether *baptism* must not be *immersion*, and whether it is not an error to consider either sprinkling or pouring to be *baptism*. And if he thus judge must he not conclude that those who have been sprinkled only, have not been *baptized*; and that to practise sprinkling instead of immersion, is to set aside the law of God?

III. *Baptism is AS BINDING NOW as at any former period.*

1. That baptism was divinely instituted as an ordinance of the christian religion, and administered by inspired Apostles to both Jews and Gentiles, is plain from the preceding remarks.

2. There is no intimation that the law of baptism was designed to be restricted to any nation or limited to any period of time. It is a general law without any restriction, except that which refers to character—"He that believeth."

3. A divine law must continue obligatory until it is repealed by divine authority. There is no intimation in the scriptures that the law of baptism has been repealed, and

therefore there is no reason to suppose its obligation has ceased.

4. The permanent duration of the ordinance is plainly implied in the promise; "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world."—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. This important promise was given at the time the ordinance was instituted, and it plainly supplies the continuance of baptism even to the end of the world.

5. Baptism is connected with the most important doctrines, duties, and privileges of the gospel. The Saviour connects it with the doctrine of the Trinity; preaching and believing the gospel; fulfilling all righteousness; and the promise of salvation.—Matt. xxviii. 19.—Matt. xvi. 16.—Matt. 3. 15. Paul connects it with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; with the believer's dying unto sin, living unto God, and putting on Christ.—Rom. vi. 3. 4.—Gal. iii. 27; He connects it also with "one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all."—Eph. iv. 4-6. Peter connects it with the remission of sins.—Acts ii. 38. And also with salvation and a good conscience.—1 Peter iii. 21. To discontinue the ordinance would be to dissolve its connexion with all these doctrines, duties, and privileges. And who, without authority from the divine Author of the institution, can do this with impunity?

5. Baptism answers all the purposes at this day, which it answered in the first age of christianity, and these are as needful now as they were then. No reason can be assigned for the observance of the ordinance in the apostle's days, which will not apply in all its force to believers in every age of the christian church.

7. The above considerations afford incontestible proof of the perpetuity of christian baptism, and shew that its observance is obligatory at present, and will continue to be as obligatory until the consummation of all things.

Should this tract fall into the hands of any of the Society

of Friends, the writer would entreat them seriously to consider, whether they are not, through their mistaken opinions regarding the perpetuity of water baptism, doing great dishonour to the Saviour by disobeying his command, and to the Holy Spirit by rejecting his written will, in setting aside what the scriptures so plainly teach to be binding on all believers to the end of the world.

To suppose that the necessity of water *baptism* is superseded by the *baptism* of the Holy Ghost, is manifestly erroneous on two accounts.

First:—There is now, in the scriptural sense of the word, no *baptism* of the Spirit. No miraculous gift, no converting operation, no sanctifying influence of the Spirit is ever, by the inspired writers, called the baptism of the Holy Ghost, except what took place on the day of Pentecost, and at the first calling of the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. On these two occasions the promise of baptism in the Holy Ghost was fulfilled, and in reference to no other events do the sacred writers speak of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The bestowment of the Spirit on these two occasions is quite different from every former and every subsequent bestowment of the Spirit, so far as our knowledge extends. As the word of God mentions no other baptism in the Holy Ghost, than what took place at Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius, we have no warrant to expect the scriptural baptism of the Spirit in the present day. We may, indeed, experience his converting and sanctifying influences, but these influences are not the scriptural baptism of the Spirit. But if there is now, in the scriptural sense, no baptism of the Spirit, how can we reasonably suppose that baptism in water is rendered necessary by our being baptized in the Spirit?

Secondly:—But supposing every believer was as truly baptized in the Holy Ghost as Cornelius was, this would in no wise diminish his obligation to be baptized in water. Did not the apostle Peter command the Pentecostian con-

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verts to be baptized? and is it not expressly recorded that they were baptized? Did not the same inspired apostle command Cornelius and his friends to be baptized in water, and assign their being baptized in the Holy Ghost as a reason for their being baptized in water? "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Is it not strange that what an inspired apostle urged as a reason for the observance of water baptism, should be adduced by some professing christians as a reason for their neglect of that baptism? If the inspired apostle is right, those who argue in direct opposition to him must be wrong. And is it not to insult, rather than to honour the Spirit, to suppose that any influence from him, (call it what we will) can justify our neglect of his commands?—to suppose that disobedience to God's word is a fruit of the Spirit? Can that within us which leads us to walk contrary to the light of revelation be the light of God's Holy Spirit? "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isaiah viii. 20.

IV. *We have no right to CHANGE the ordinance, by substituting SPRINKLING for IMMERSION, and INFANTS for BELIEVERS.*

1. The scriptures contain no intimation that any such change should ever be made. The divine sanction cannot therefore be pleaded in favour of it.

2. Man has no right to change a divine institution. As much authority is required to change an institution as to establish one. If we change a divine law, we put ourselves in the place of God, or rather in direct opposition to him.

3. To change an ordinance is to betray a trust and to handle the word of God deceitfully. As stewards we are required faithfully to keep and steadfastly to maintain the scriptural laws and regulations of Zion.

4. To change the ordinance from the immersion of be-

lievers to the sprinkling of infants is to subvert it. No instance can be produced, in which, by either precept or example, the scriptures authorize the sprinkling of infants.—The immersion of believers and the sprinkling of infants are quite distinct and different things. As the immersion of believers is baptism, and as there is but *one baptism*: infant sprinkling, so far as it prevails, subverts believers' baptism.

5. We have no more right to change baptism, than we have to change any other part of the revealed counsel of God. If, therefore, we change this ordinance, may we not with as little impropriety change the Lord's supper and every other part of revealed worship? If we admit a departure from the scriptures on this subject, why should we not admit a departure from them on every other subject? If we may, without scriptural authority, sprinkle an infant, why may we not worship an image, invoke a saint, and pray for the dead?

6. It was one of the great sins of the scribes and pharisees, that they rejected the commands of God to keep the traditions of men. "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the traditions of men—Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.—Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."—Mark vii. 7-13. Thus they were turned from the truth by giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men. And will not our worship be worse than vain, if we set aside the divine ordinance of believer's immersion for the human tradition of infant sprinkling?

7. The scriptures represent it as a crime of great enormity to change a divine ordinance. Awful threatenings are denounced by the prophet, Isaiah xxiv. 5. One of the sins for which these threatenings are denounced is, "they have changed the ordinance." Whatever ordinance is intended, it is plain that to change an ordinance is a great

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sin. When two of the sons of Aaron made a change in the offering of incense, "there went a fire from the Lord and devoured them."—Lev. x 1-3 The most severe judgments are denounced against those who add to, or take away from the book of God.—Rev. xxii. 18, 19. These passages should make us tremble at the thought of changing a divine institution.

8. To change the ordinance from the immersion of believers to the sprinkling of infants, is to subvert an instructive and profitable rite by an unmeaning and useless ceremony. This is neither needful, profitable, nor lawful. To make such a change is to do evil without even the appearance of good.

V. *Baptism is an IMPORTANT ordinance.*

Baptism does not wash away original sin; it does not bring into the covenant of grace; nor is it a seal of the covenant of grace, as it is sometimes improperly called. Yet it is an important rite, and cannot be wilfully neglected with impunity. In proof of this we offer the following remarks:—

1. Baptism is plainly, solemnly, and repeatedly enjoined by the highest of all authority—divine command. He, by whom all things were created, and by whom all worlds will be judged, with his own lips, and in his last address on earth, commanded an observance of the rite in the following impressive words,—“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. Every word of this commission, and all the circumstances connected with it, tend to show the importance of *baptism*—the dignity of its Author—the time when it was given—the allusion to universal dominion—the connexion of baptism with the teaching of all nations—and its relation to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. On the memorable Day

of Pentecost the apostle Peter, under the direct influence of the Holy Ghost, thus commanded the awakened Jews, "Repent and be *baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."—Acts ii. 38. When on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost, and God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, the same inspired apostle commanded them to be *baptized* in the name of the Lord.—Acts x. 48.—Ananias, acting under a special commission from the Lord, thus commanded the penitent Saul of Tarsus, "Arise and be *baptized*, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."—Acts xvii. 16. Thus the divine Being has given us precept upon precept, to call our serious attention to this ordinance. Can any one with a clear conscience suppose that what God so plainly, so solemnly, and so repeatedly enjoins is of little importance? Could there be a greater insult to the King of Zion than to suppose that a law which he has given with so much solemnity is unimportant and non-essential?

2. Baptism possesses all the importance an ordinance can derive from the plainly expressed sanction of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is evident from the record of the Saviour's baptism,—“Jesus came from Nazareth, of Galilee, and was *baptized* of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”—Mark i. 9–11. Jesus by being himself baptized, has in the most unequivocal manner set the seal of his sanction to the ordinance, and given to it all the importance to be derived from his own divine example. The Holy Ghost, by selecting the time of the Saviour's baptism for his public descent upon the Son of God, to anoint him as the promised Messiah, has fully evinced his high and special approbation of the ordinance. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ chose this

time of the Redeemer's baptism as the fittest occasion to proclaim with an audible voice from heaven, that Jesus is his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased, and of giving to the world the command to hear him. What an honour is thus put on this gospel ordinance! If this personal observance of baptism by the Son of God, this surprising expression of the Father's approbation and of the Holy Ghost's sanction of the ordinance, will not establish the importance of *baptism*, then we may for ever despair of being able to prove that anything is important. Dare any man who trembles at God's word, say, after reading this account of baptism, that it is an unimportant ordinance?

3. The importance of baptism is evident from its doctrinal import and practical design. Baptism is emblematical of the most important facts—the sufferings, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of the Redeemer.—Luke xii. 50: Romans vi. 3–5. It is symbolical of the most important change that can possibly be effected in the human character—"a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness."—John iii. 5: Romans vi. 3–8. Hence it is called "the washing of regeneration,"—Titus iii. 5. It is the outward sign of a renewed heart. Baptism is also typical of the most important privileges that can be enjoyed by man—"the remission of sins,"—Acts ii. 38; the washing away of sins by the blood of Christ,—Acts xxii. 16; conformity to fellowship with, and interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the purpose and benefits of his sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection.—Rom. vi. 3–8: Col. ii. 12. Baptism is a solemn profession of belief in the gospel,—Gal. iii. 27; in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity,—Matt. xxviii. 19; and in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead,—1 Cor. xv. 29. Can an ordinance, instituted by infinite wisdom to shew forth so many important facts, doctrines, privileges and duties, be an unimportant rite? As a typical ordinance, baptism is much more comprehensive and important than the Lord's Supper. Indeed the

sacred writers have allusively connected baptism with almost every thing that is dear to the Christian.

4. Whatever opinion we erring mortals may entertain of baptism, it is evident the infallible Judge considers it of great importance—of so much importance that the observance of it is essential to fulfil all righteousness. “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,”—Matt. iii. 15. If we say the observance of baptism is not a part of righteousness, do we not directly contradict the Son of God? If we admit it is a part of righteousness, does not that admission necessarily imply the importance of *baptism*? This it must imply, unless righteousness is unimportant. For what purpose did our Lord assign this reason for the observance of baptism, if not to shew the importance of the rite? And for what purpose did he use the plural pronoun “us,” if not to denote that it is important for all his disciples, as it was for himself, to be baptized? If the Saviour’s reason for observing the ordinance be a correct one, then if we reject baptism we do not fulfil all righteousness; we offend at least in one point, and if we wilfully do this, it will be well for us to consider how far the apostle’s charge is applicable to us: “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”—James ii. 10.

The following remarks of Mr. Wesley deserve attention, although in thus speaking he condemned his own practice. He says, “Let our Lord’s submitting to baptism teach us an holy exactness in the observance of those institutions which owe their obligation merely to divine command. Surely thus it becometh all his followers to fulfil all righteousness. Jesus had no sin to wash away: and yet he was baptized. And God owned his ordinance, so as to make it the season of pouring forth the Holy Spirit upon him. And when can we expect this sacred effusion, but in an humble attendance on divine appointments?”—Note on Matt. iii. 16. Mr. Wesley says in his note on Romans vi. 4, that the ancient manner of baptizing was by immersion.

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In order that there may be, what Mr. Wesley justly says there ought to be, an holy exactness in our observance of the divine command we must be *baptized* by an immersion in water. If we administer, or receive the rite by either sprinkling or pouring, instead of observing an holy exactness, are we not guilty of a daring innovation of the divine law?

5. Baptism is from heaven; it is the counsel of God; and it is "the answer of a good conscience toward God,"—Matt. xxi. 25: Luke vii. 3: 1 Peter iii. 21. If therefore a communication from heaven be important, if the counsel of God be important, and if a good conscience be important,—if each of these be important, then have we in them a threefold argument to establish the importance of *baptism*.

6. "The Lord's Supper is generally considered an important ordinance. But does not baptism occur in the scriptures, in the form of both command and example, beyond all comparison more frequently than the Lord's Supper? And is it not described in a more solemn and impressive manner? Do the scriptures ever say the Lord's Supper is from heaven? Do they ever insist on the observance of it so essential to fulfil all righteousness? Do they ever call it the answer of a good conscience? Do they ever say, Repent and receive the Lord's Supper for the remission of sins? Do they ever promise, He that believeth and receiveth the Lord's Supper shall be saved? Do they ever command, Teach all nations, administering to them the Lord's Supper, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" The Lord's Supper is an important ordinance, but the scriptures attach more importance to *baptism* than to the Lord's Supper. How is it then that many who are ever ready to advocate the importance of the Lord's Supper, are ever reluctant to admit the importance of baptism?—that many who think it sinful to neglect the Lord's Supper, think it needless to observe

baptism? Is it because we are apt to think that most important which is most convenient?—because we prefer the enjoyments of the Lord's table, to the cross and shame of the Lord's baptism?

VI. *The connexion of Baptism with Salvation.*

There is a summary way in which many attempt to dispose of all that is said on the subject of baptism. They do not deny that it is a scripture ordinance, but they attempt to quiet their consciences and to justify their disobedience by saying,—“Baptism will not save us, we can be saved without it, and therefore we will not be baptized.” Strange language from one who calls himself a christian! Let us examine this selfish apology for disobedience.

1. It is undoubtedly true that *baptism* will not save us. Jesus Christ is the only Saviour; “for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved.” But is this a sufficient apology for the neglect of baptism? If so, consider to how many things the same apology will with equal propriety apply. The Lord's Supper will not save us, shall we not therefore shew the Lord's death? Public worship will not save us, shall we therefore forsake the assembling of ourselves together? An observance of the Sabbath will not save us, shall we therefore not remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy?—Searching the Scriptures will not save us, shall we therefore not look into the perfect law of liberty? Almsgiving will not save us, shall we therefore shut up our bowels of compassion? Zeal in religion will not save us, shall we therefore sleep as do others? But we need not enumerate the particulars, we may sum up all in one; no work, nothing that we can do, will save us, salvation is by grace and not of works; shall we therefore live in universal disobedience? We may excuse ourselves from every act of obedience to God for the same reason, if we neglect *baptism* because it will not save us.

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not save him, acts on the unworthy principle of mere selfishness. He asks no less a reward than everlasting life as the condition of his obedience! He will not serve for love, not even for divine love! He will not obey God for so low a consideration as to prove his delight in the law of the Lord,—or to evince it is his meat and drink to do the will of God,—or to exemplify the self-denial of the gospel,—or to shew his faith by his works,—or to manifest the constraining influence of the love of Christ,—or to demonstrate the holy tendency of divine truth,—or to honour and glorify God! No, even all these would be too poor a recompense for his obedience, he will be satisfied with nothing less than an eternal weight of glory. He, in effect, says to God, give me this as the reward of my obedience, or I will not obey; nothing less than this will move my feet in the way of thy testimonies! Is not this the spirit that breathes in the assertion—Baptism will not save me, therefore I will not be baptized? Can anything be conceived more foreign from the spirit of the gospel? He who will not obey God in the ordinance of baptism, because he thinks his eternal life does not depend on it, needs “that one teach him again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” He has yet to learn that Christ died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again;—that the Saviour requires obedience to all things whatsoever he has commanded as an evidence of love to him;—“he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;—ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,”—that there can be no real conversion without a surrender of the heart and will to the Lord Jesus, to be moulded and directed by him at his pleasure;—that the first act of a convert is to yield his will to the will of God, and to resolve by grace to do whatever he requires. His prayer is, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God.”

It never enters into his heart to inquire, how far he may live in disobedience to God, and yet be saved.

3. Those who practise believers' immersion do not suppose the ordinance has any saving virtue; they attend to it not because they expect to be saved by it, but because they wish to do the will of God. They believe repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ ought always to precede baptism,—that persons ought to be the subjects of saving grace before they are baptized. If any suppose the rite to have a saving virtue, it is not those who practise believers' immersion, but those who practise infant sprinkling. It is these and not those who say the rite makes the subject of it a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; who say it washes away original sin, or brings into the covenant of grace, or is a seal of the covenant. That those who attribute such a wonderful virtue in infant sprinkling, a mere invention of man, should deny the importance of believers' immersion, an institution of God, is a moral problem which we must leave for the solution of the casuist.

4. It should be remembered that the assertions—"Baptism will not save us," and "We can be saved without baptism," are quite distinct and widely different. The truth of the former does not necessarily imply the truth of the latter. There are many things which will not save us, yet without which we cannot be saved. Good works will not save us, yet we cannot be saved without good works. It is quite evident baptism will not save us, but it is not quite evident we can be saved without baptism. If baptism be commanded by God, and that it is, is proved in the preceding pages beyond all contradiction; then if we can be saved without baptism, we can be saved without obedience to God. And if so, where is the propriety of such scriptures as the following?—Jesus "being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. A prophet shall the Lord our God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to harken than the fat of rams." No man can be saved without such a state of mind as will lead to a cheerful obedience to all the known

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will of God. None can be saved who wilfully continue in disobedience to one of God's commands, knowing it to be a command of God. God saves none who will not submit to his authority. If, therefore, we know that God has commanded us to be baptized, and we will not be baptized, while in such a state of mind we cannot be saved.

5. Those who say, they can be saved without baptism, should consider on what evidence they found such opinion. The author of eternal salvation has said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But has he ever said, He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved? Can such a promise be found in any part of the New Testament? Would not such a promise imply that the words "is baptized," in the great gospel commission have no meaning?—that they are mere sound without sense? According to this commission the persons to be baptized are such as believe and are baptized; and the scriptures nowhere teach another way of salvation—they never give the slightest intimation that any who wilfully neglect baptism can be saved. No one has a scriptural warrant to expect salvation if he refuse to be baptized. It is absurd to suppose that God's word encourages us to expect salvation without being baptized, while it positively commands us to be baptized. The scriptures offer no such premium on disobedience to the divine commands. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." As baptism is commanded by God—as the scriptures promise salvation to those who do the will of God—and as they declare, that none but such, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,—is it not presumption to suppose that we can be saved if we wilfully neglect baptism? To suppose this is to be wise above what is written, and to mark out a way of salvation different from that revealed by God. It is to suppose that God's law of salvation is too strict to be enforced—that he will relax his requirements—make a compromise with the sinner—alter the word that has gone out of his lips—and forfeit his honour in saving the disobedient! "Be not deceived God is not mocked;" what he hath said shall be done; what he hath commanded shall stand fast. He who hears the sayings of Christ and does them not, builds on the sand. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Reader—you have now before you a concise view of christian baptism. If you have read it with attention, has not your conscience

borne testimony to the correctness of its statements, and the force of its arguments, in proof that the immersion of believers in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is the baptism instituted by Jesus Christ? That the ordinance is still binding on all the disciples of Jesus, and will continue to be so, even unto the end of the world? That we have no right to change the subjects of the rite, or the mode of its administration, but are bound to keep it with a holy exactness as the Redeemer has delivered it unto us? That though an observance of it will not save us, yet, as it is enjoined by him who alone has the power of bestowing eternal life, and who will be the final judge of all, a wilful disregard of it is incompatible with that state of mind which warrants the expectation of eternal salvation?—We say, has not your conscience attested the correspondence of what is stated on these points with the spirit and letter of the law, and the testimony of God?

Reader, are you a believer in the gospel and yet not *baptized* on a profession of faith? Then arise and be baptized; make haste and delay not to keep the commandment of God; confer not with flesh and blood, but deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow in the footsteps of Jesus; go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach; for if you be reproached for Christ happy will you be; but remember, if you be ashamed to confess Christ before men, of you also will the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

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